

REMARKS:

The Examiner has rejected claims 12, 14 and 16 under 35 USC 112 second paragraph for the reasons given in detail in paragraph 2 of page 2. In response thereto, appropriate correction has been taken. Review and acceptance is requested.

Claims 10 through 18 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferguson '697 in view of Sawan '468.

In response thereto, the applicant has amended claim 10 to incorporate the features of former claim 17 with the additional limitation that the coarse-pore carrier and the fine-pore functional coating are both made from a ceramic material. Claim 17 has accordingly been cancelled. The applicant submits that claim 10 is distinguished from the prior art of record for the following reasons.

In rejecting former claim 17, the Examiner points out (see page 5 first paragraph of the office action) that Sawan discloses a filter which is porous with a pore size which can be adjusted to adjust the flow rate and has referred to column 6, lines 11 through 26 of the Sawan disclosure. The Examiner then concludes that optimization of the pore size of both the filter and the coating would be obvious. However, new claim 10 specifies that both the coarse-pore carrier and the fine-pore coating are ceramic. This is distinguished from the Sawan disclosure, since the only coating disclosed by Sawan is a microbial coating of silver ions providing bactericidal properties. Sawan is completely silent concerning the possibility of having a coating which is also made from a filtering ceramic element, since coatings of silver do not exhibit filtering properties and do not have pore sizes. Therefore, Sawan fairly teaches a single, one

component filter preferentially made from polymers (see column 5, lines 35 through 40) and does not propose a filter having the double-pore ceramic construction now claimed (i.e. a porous support with longitudinal channels which has a further porous coating). Although columns 6, lines 4 through 7 of Sawan mention use of ceramic filter materials, there is no particular detail in that disclosure. In any event, Sawan is completely silent concerning the possibility of forming a filter having a fine-pore ceramic coating. Accordingly, Sawan simply teaches a low pass filter.

The filter in accordance with the invention creates a two-layered pore distribution: a coarse filtering layer trapping larger objects and a generally thinner (coating) additional fine-pore ceramic layer for filtering the smaller objects. Since the overall resistance of the filter depends on the individual resistances of the layers, by making the two pore structure distribution in a coarse and fine gradations as claimed, the instant invention reduces the overall resistance of the filtering material and therefore increases the throughput of the filter. Accordingly, the invention claims properties having advantages not suggested by prior art and is sufficiently distinguished from that prior art to satisfy the conditions for patenting in the United States. The dependent claims are patentable by virtue of their dependence on patentable independent claim 10. Favorable review and passage to issuance is accordingly requested.

No new matter has been added in this amendment.

Respectfully submitted

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